

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 19 to 39 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. (Please amend Claims 1, 2, 8, 12 and 18) and add Claims 40 and 41 as follows. A marked-up copy of the amended claims, showing the changes made thereto, is attached as Appendix II.

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1. (Amended) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus comprising:

- a light source having a plurality of light beam emitting sections;
- a light deflector for deflecting a plurality of light beams emitted respectively from said plurality of light beam emitting sections of said light source;
- a scanning optical system for focussing said plurality of light beams deflected by said light deflector on a surface to be scanned; and
- a photodetector for controlling a timing of a start of scanning of said plurality of light beams by detecting a part of said plurality of light beams deflected by said light deflector as detection light beams,

wherein the timing of the start of scanning is controlled to align the centers of scanning areas of said light beams with each other on the surface to be scanned while allowing starting points of scanning of said light beams to differ from each other when said plurality of light beams have respective wavelengths that are different from each other.

2. (Amended) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

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a detection optical element for converging said detection light beams and leading them to said photodetector,

wherein said detection optical element has its optical surfaces arranged orthogonally relative to the detection light beams.

3. (Unamended From Previous Version) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said detection optical element comprises an anamorphic lens.

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4. (Unamended From Previous Version) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said detection optical element is made of a plastic material.

5. (Unamended From Previous Version) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said scanning optical system comprises a refraction optical element and a diffraction optical element.

6. (Unamended From Previous Version) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said refraction optical element and said diffraction optical element are made of a plastic material.

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7. (Unamended From Previous Version) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said detection optical element and said refraction optical element are integrally formed by using a plastic material.

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8. (Amended) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising an incident optical system for leading a plurality of light beams emitted from said light source to said optical deflector.

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9. (Unamended From Previous Version) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said incident optical system comprises a first lens for collimating each of said plurality of light beams emitted from said light source and a second lens for focussing each of said plurality of collimated light beams on the deflection plane of the optical deflector as a linear image extending in the main-scanning direction.

10. (Unamended From Previous Version) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said detection optical element and said second lens are integrally formed by using a plastic material.

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11. (Unamended From Previous Version) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said photodetector detects part of each of a plurality of light beams deflected by said optical deflector and controls the timing of the start of scanning of each of said plurality of light beams.

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12. (Amended) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus comprising:
a light source having a plurality of light beam emitting sections;
a light deflector for deflecting a plurality of light beams emitted respectively
from said plurality of light beam emitting sections of said light source;
a scanning optical system for focussing said plurality of light beams
deflected by said light deflector on a surface to be scanned;
a photodetector for controlling a timing of a start of scanning of said
plurality of light beams by detecting a part of said plurality of light beams deflected by said
light deflector as detection light beams; and
a detection optical element for converging said detection light beams and
leading them to said photodetector,
wherein said detection optical element has its optical surfaces arranged
orthogonally relative to said detection light beams.

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13. (Unamended From Previous Version) A multibeam scanning optical
apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said detection optical element comprises an
anamorphic lens.

14. (Unamended From Previous Version) A multibeam scanning optical
apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said detection optical element is made of a plastic
material.

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15. (Unamended From Previous Version) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said scanning optical system comprises a refraction optical element and a diffraction optical element.

16. (Unamended From Previous Version) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 15, wherein said refraction optical element and said diffraction optical element are made of a plastic material.

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17. (Unamended From Previous Version) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said detection optical element and said refraction optical element are integrally formed by using a plastic material.

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18. (Amended) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 12, further comprising[:] an incident optical system for leading a plurality of light beams emitted from said light source to said optical deflector.

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40. (New) An image forming apparatus comprising a multibeam scanning optical apparatus as defined in any of claims 1 to 11 and an image carrier arranged on the surface to be scanned.

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41. (New) A color image forming apparatus comprising a multibeam scanning optical apparatus as defined in any of claims 1 to 11 and a plurality of image carriers arranged respectively on the surface to be scanned for forming different images.